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ABSTRACT

Many teenagers engage in behaviors that increase their risk of becoming infected with HIV. This document is a compilation of information about AIDS and HIV Infection, and provides suggestions for parents and other adults in discussing AIDS/HIV with young people. Basic facts are outlined, including what AIDS is and how HIV infection causes AIDS; how one can and cannot become infected with HIV; and answers to common questions young people have about AIDS. Tips and suggestions for how to talk with young people about HIV infection and AIDS in general are provided. Specific sections focus on how to discuss AIDS/HIV with younger children (late elementary and middle school age) and teenagers (junior and senior high school students), and what information is necessary and appropriate for each age level. Finally, suggestions are made for joining in community response to this issue and where to go for further information and assistance. (ND)

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ED 399 227

AIDS PREVENTION GUIDE

The Facts About HIV Infection And AIDS

Putting The Facts To Use

Talking With Young People About HIV Infection And AIDS

Deciding What To Say To Younger Children (Late Elementary And Middle School Aged)

Deciding What To Say To Teenagers (Junior And Senior High School Aged)

How To Join The Community Response

Where To Go For Further Information And Assistance

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For Parents And Other Adults Concerned About Youth

AMERICA RESPONDS TO AIDS

CDC
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service

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What Is HIV Infection? And What Is AIDS?

Young People Do Get AIDS

Many people think that young people don't get AIDS. That's not true. AIDS can affect anyone—of any age, of any ethnic or racial background—who engages in behavior with an infected person that can transmit HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

As of December 1993, nearly 68,000 people aged 20-29 have been diagnosed with AIDS. Because a person can be infected with the virus that causes AIDS for as long as 10 or more years before the signs of AIDS appear, many of these young people were likely infected when they were teenagers.

People are becoming infected with HIV at younger ages. In fact, in the early 1980s, the average age at infection was over 30. In the four years between 1987 and 1991, the average age at infection decreased to 25. During these four years, it is estimated, one in every four new HIV infections occurred in people under 25 years of age.

Many teens engage in behaviors that increase their risk of becoming infected. Adults sometimes have no idea that the young people they know may be having sexual intercourse or experimenting with injected drugs. These activities can increase their risk of infection with the virus that causes AIDS.

All young people need to know about AIDS and the specific actions they can take to protect themselves and their loved ones from becoming infected. Let's begin with the basics.

Some Disturbing Facts

Surveys have found that:

- the average age for a girl in the United States to have sexual intercourse for the first time is 16. The average age for a boy is 15.5.
- it is estimated that 3 million teens are infected with sexually transmitted diseases (venereal diseases–VD) each year. The virus that causes AIDS is sexually transmitted.
- 60 percent of all American high school seniors have used illegal drugs. Some of these drugs are injected. The virus that causes AIDS is spread through the sharing of needles or syringes.

What Is AIDS?

AIDS stands for *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*, a disease in which the body's immune system breaks down. The immune system fights off infections and certain other diseases. Because the system fails, a person with AIDS develops a variety of life-threatening illnesses.

AIDS Is Caused By HIV Infection

AIDS is caused by the virus called the *human immunodeficiency virus,* or HIV. A virus is a small germ that can cause disease.

If HIV enters your body, you may become infected with HIV. A blood test can detect HIV antibodies if you are infected. Antibodies are substances your body makes to fight an infection.

A person who is infected can infect others, even if no symptoms are present. You cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with HIV. An infected person can appear completely healthy.

Even when no symptoms are visible, however, anyone infected with HIV should be under a doctor's care.

People infected with HIV can develop many health problems. These can include extreme weight loss, severe pneumonia, forms of cancer, and damage to the nervous system. These illnesses signal the onset of AIDS. In some people, these illnesses may develop within a year or two. Others may stay healthy for as long as 10 or more years before symptoms appear. Early medical treatment may prolong a person's life.

No one will develop AIDS unless he or she has been infected with HIV. By preventing HIV infection, we can prevent AIDS.

How You Can And Cannot Become Infected With HIV

You can become infected with HIV in two main ways:

- Having sexual intercourse—vaginal, anal, or perhaps oral—with an infected person.
- Sharing needles or syringes with an infected person.

Also, women infected with HIV can pass the virus to their babies during pregnancy or during birth. In some cases they can also pass it on when breast-feeding. Some people have been infected by receiving blood transfusions, especially during the period before 1985, when careful screening and laboratory testing of the blood supply began.

You cannot be infected by giving blood at a blood bank.

How Do You Get HIV From Sexual Intercourse?

HIV can be spread through unprotected sexual intercourse, from male to female, female to male, or male to male. Female-to-female sexual transmission is possible, but rare. Unprotected sexual intercourse means sexual intercourse without correct and consistent condom use.

HIV may be in an infected person's blood, semen, or vaginal secretions. It is thought that it can enter the body through cuts or sores—some so small you don't know they're there—on tissue in the vagina, penis, or rectum, and possibly the mouth.

HIV is transmitted by anal, vaginal, or oral intercourse with a person who is infected with HIV.

Since many infected people have no apparent symptoms of the condition, it's hard to be sure who is or is not infected with HIV. So, the more sex partners you have, the greater your chances of encountering one who is infected, and becoming infected yourself.

How Do You Get HIV From Using Needles?

Sharing needles or syringes, even once, is an easy way to be infected with HIV and other germs. Sharing needles to inject drugs is the most dangerous form of needle sharing. Blood from an infected person can remain in or on a needle or syringe and then be transferred directly into the next person who uses it.

Sharing other types of needles also may transmit HIV and other germs. These types of needles include those used to inject steriods and those used for tattooing or ear-piercing.

If you plan to have your ears pierced or get a tattoo, make sure you go to a qualified technician who uses sterile equipment. Don't be shy about asking questions. Reputable technicians will explain the safety measures they follow.

HIV And Babies

A woman infected with HIV can pass the virus on to her baby during pregnancy or during birth. She can also pass it on when breast-feeding. If a woman is infected

before or during pregnancy, her child has about one chance in four of being born infected. Taking AZT during pregnancy can reduce this risk.

Any woman who is considering having a baby and who thinks she might have placed herself at risk for HIV infection—even if this occurred years ago—should seek counseling and testing before she gets pregnant. To find out where to go in your area for counseling and testing, call your local health department or the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS).

For more information about counseling and testing, see the part of this guide titled "Common Questions, Accurate Answers."

Blood Transfusions And HIV

Although in the past some people became infected with HIV from receiving blood transfusions, this risk has been virtually eliminated. Since 1985, all donated blood has been tested for evidence of HIV. All blood found to contain evidence of HIV is discarded. Currently in the United States, there is almost no chance of infection with HIV through a blood transfusion.

You cannot get HIV from giving blood at a blood bank or other established blood collection center. The needles used for blood donations are sterile. They are used once, then destroyed.

What Are Ways By Which You Cannot Get HIV And AIDS?

HIV infection doesn't just happen. You can't simply "catch" it like a cold or flu. Unlike cold or flu viruses, HIV is not spread by coughs or sneezes.

You won't get HIV through everyday contact with infected people at school, work, home, or anywhere else.

You won't get HIV from clothes, phones, or toilet seats. It can't be passed on by things like spoons, cups, or other objects that someone who is infected with the virus has used. You cannot get it from everyday contact with an infected person.

You won't get AIDS from a mosquito bite. The AIDS virus does not live in a mosquito, and it is not transmitted through a mosquito's salivary glands like other diseases such as malaria or yellow fever. You won't get it from bed bugs, lice, flies, or other insects. You won't get HIV from sweat, tears, or sneezes either.

Not All Of The Answers Are In

You won't get HIV from a kiss. Experts are not completely certain about HIV transmission through deep, prolonged, or "French" kissing. While scientists believe it is remotely possible, there has never been a known case of HIV transfusion, through kissing. Most scientists agree that transmission of HIV through deep or prolonged kissing may be possible, but would be extremely unlikely.

Common Questions, Accurate Answers

An important part of being ready to talk to young people about preventing HIV infection and AIDS is being able to answer questions they may ask.

If someone asks you a question about HIV infection or AIDS and you do not know the answer, it's okay to say you don't know. Don't make up an answer—faking it often does more harm than good.

Treat a tough question as a chance to show the questioner how to get information about HIV infection and AIDS independently. You, or anyone else, can get accurate answers to difficult questions by calling your local AIDS hotline or the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS). You do not have to give your name, and the call is free.

To help you answer questions that might come up, here are some commonly asked questions with scientifically correct answers:

If somebody in my class at school has AIDS, am I likely to get it too?

- No. HIV is transmitted by unprotected sexual intercourse, needle sharing, or infected blood. It can also be given by an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, birth, or breast-feeding.
- People infected with HIV cannot pass the virus to others through ordinary activities of young people in school.
- You will not become infected with HIV just by attending school with someone who is infected or who has AIDS.

Can I become infected with HIV from "French " kissing?

- Not likely. HIV occasionally can be found in saliva, but in very low concentrations—so low that scientists believe it is virtually impossible to transmit infection by deep kissing.
- The possibility exists that cuts or sores in the mouth may provide direct access for HIV to enter the bloodstream during prolonged deep kissing.
- There has never been a single case documented in which HIV was transmitted by kissing.
- Scientists, however, cannot absolutely rule out the possibility of transmission during prolonged, deep kissing because of possible blood contact.

Can I become infected with HIV from oral sex?

- It is possible.
- Oral sex often involves semen, vaginal secretions, or blood—fluids that contain HIV.
- HIV is transmitted by the introduction of infected semen, vaginal secretions, or blood into another person's body.
- During oral intercourse, the virus could enter the body through tiny cuts or sores in the mouth.

As long as I use a latex condom during sexual intercourse, I won't get HIV infection, right?

- Latex condoms have been shown to prevent HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- You have to use them properly. And you have to use them every time you have sex—vaginal, anal, and oral—with a male.
- The only sure way to avoid infection through sex is to abstain from sexual intercourse, or engage in sexual intercourse only with someone who is not infected.
- For more information about condoms, see the question on how to use a condom.

My friend has anal intercourse with her boyfriend so that she won't get pregnant. She won't get AIDS from doing that, right?

- Wrong. Anal intercourse with an infected partner is one of the ways HIV has been transmitted.
- Whether you are male or female, anal intercourse with an infected person is very risky.

If I have never injected drugs and have had sexual intercourse only with a person of the opposite sex, could I have become infected with HIV?

- Yes. HIV does not discriminate. You do not have to be homosexual or use drugs to become infected.
- Both males and females can become infected and transmit the infection to another person through intercourse.
- If a previous sex partner was infected, you may be infected as well.

Is it possible to become infected with HIV by donating blood?

- No. There is absolutely no risk of HIV infection from donating blood.
- Blood donation centers use a new, sterile needle for each donation.

I had a blood transfusion. Is it likely that I am infected with HIV?

- It is highly unlikely. All donated blood has been tested for HIV since 1985.
- Donors are asked if they have practiced behaviors that place them at increased risk for HIV. If they have, they are not allowed to donate blood.
- Today the American blood supply is extremely safe.
- If you are still concerned about the remote possiblity of HIV infection from a transfusion, you should see your doctor or seek counseling about getting an HIV antibody test. Call the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS) or your local health department to find out about counseling and testing facilities in your area.

Can I become infected with HIV from a toilet seat or other objects I routinely use?

- No. HIV does not live on toilet seats or other everyday objects, even those on which body fluids may sometimes be found. Other examples of everday objects are doorknobs, phones, money, and drinking fountains.

Can I become infected with HIV from a mosquito or other insects?

- You won't get HIV from a mosquito bite. The AIDS virus does not live in a mosquito, and it is not transmitted through a mosquito's salivary glands like other diseases such as malaria or yellow fever. You won't get it from bed bugs, lice, flies, or other insects, either.

A friend of mine told me that as long as I am taking birth control pills, I will never get HIV infection. It this true?

- No. Birth control pills do not protect against HIV.
- You can become infected with HIV while you are taking birth control pills.
- The only sure way not to become infected is to:
  —avoid needle sharing
  —abstain from unprotected sexual intercourse, or engage in sexual intercourse only with a partner who is not infected.
- Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing HIV infection and other STDs. Use them properly *every* time you have sex.
- Even if you are taking the pill, you should use a latex condom unless you are sure that your partner is not infected.

I think I might have been infected two months ago when I had intercourse without a condom with someone I didn't know. Should I get an HIV test?

- You should seek counseling about the need for HIV testing.

What do I do if I think I am infected with HIV?

- Remember, you must have engaged in behaviors that place you at risk for HIV infection. Those behaviors include:
  —sharing needles with an infected person.
  —having unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person.
- If you are still concerned, you need to talk to someone about getting an HIV test that will determine if you are infected. That person might be a parent, doctor, or other health care provider, or someone who works at an AIDS counseling and testing center.
- Call the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS) to find out where you can go in your area to get counseling about an HIV test. You don't have to give your name, and the call is free. You can also call your State or local health department. The number is under "Health Department" in the Government section of your telephone book.
- Your doctor may advise you to be counseled and tested if you have hemophilia or have received a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985.

What is the proper way to use a condom?

You can significantly decrease your chances of infection with HIV or any other sexually transmitted disease if you follow this list of simple instructions:

- Use a latex condom every time you have sex—anal, oral, or vaginal. Latex serves as a barrier to the virus. "Lambskin" or "natural membrane"

condoms may not be as good because of the pores in the material. Look for the word "latex" on the package.

- As soon as the penis becomes erect, put the condom on it.
- Leave a small space in the top of the condom to catch the semen, or use a condom with a reservoir tip. Remove any air that remains in the tip by gently pressing toward the base of the penis.
- When you use a lubricant, check the label to make sure it is water-based. Do not use petroleum-based jelly, cold cream, baby oil, or other lubricants such as cooking oil or shortening. These weaken the latex condom and can cause it to break.
- If you feel the condom break while you are having sex, stop immediately and pull out. Do not continue until you have put on a new condom.
- After climax (ejaculation), withdraw while the penis is still erect, holding on to the rim of the condom while pulling out so that it doesn't come off.
- Never use a condom more than once.
- Don't use a condom that is brittle or that has been stored near heat or in your wallet or glove compartment for a long time. Check the package for date of expiration.
- A condom can't do you any good if you don't have one when you need it.

I think my son may be having sexual relations with other males. Is there any information in addition to the materials in this guide that I need to know about before I talk to him about HIV and AIDS?

- The information presented in this guide is pertinent to all youth, regardless of their sexual orientation.
- HIV does not discriminate. It is not who you are, but what you do that determines whether you can become infected with the virus.
- A latex condom should be used when having any type of intercourse.
- For more information on specifically male-to-male HIV transmission, call the CDC National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-342-AIDS.

Talking With Young People About HIV Infection And AIDS

Young people today often face tough decisions about sex and drugs. Most likely, you will not be with the children you care about when they face these choices. But if you talk to them about decision making and HIV and AIDS prevention now, you can help them resist peer pressure and make informed choices that will help protect their health, now and for the rest of their lives.

Think Of Yourself As A Counselor

When talking with a young person about HIV infection and AIDS, think of your role as that of counselor, advisor, coach, best friend, or guide. Your goal: to help a young person learn how to make smart decisions about how to act in a healthful manner and avoid infection with HIV.

Tips For Starting A Conversation

You can start talking about HIV infection and AIDS at any time and in any way you choose. If you find it awkward to bring the topic up, you can look for cues that will help you. Here are some examples:

The Media. You can find plenty of cues in the media, which give HIV infection and AIDS a lot of attention. Look for stories about AIDS and advertisements about HIV prevention on television, on the radio, in newspapers, and in magazines. Start a conversation by commenting on one of them or asking a young person how he or she feels about it.

Deciding What Young People Need To Know

As an adult who knows the young people you will talk with, you are in the best position to decide what they need to know about HIV infection and AIDS.

Think carefully about their knowledge and experience. How old are the children? How much do they already know about HIV infection, AIDS, and other related subjects, such as sex and drug use? Where have they gotten their information? From friends? School? Television? You? Is it likely to be accurate?

Also ask yourself these questions: Is it possible that the young people you will be talking with are sexually active? Have they tried drugs? Do they spend time with people who do these things?

In addition, consider your family's religious and cultural values. Do you want to convey these in the conversation? How will you get them across?

These are important questions. Answering them will help you stress the information that the young people in your life most need to know.

School. Ask a young person what he or she is learning in health, science, or any other class about HIV infection and AIDS. Use the answer to launch your conversation.

Community. Local events, such as AIDS benefits or health fairs, can serve as handy conversation starters. You might even propose going to such an event with a young person as an educational experience.

Children May Ask. Don't be surprised if a young person asks you directly about HIV infection and AIDS. You can also use young people's questions about related topics, such as dating or sex, to lead into a conversation about HIV infection and AIDS.

How To Keep The Conversation Running Smoothly

It Can Be A Challenge. Talking about HIV infection and AIDS can be difficult. You may feel uncomfortable just thinking about it. That's understandable. If you are nervous or embarrassed, don't be afraid to say so. Bringing your feelings into the open can help break the tension. Besides, a young person will sense your uneasiness even if you don't mention it.

Review The Facts. You don't have to be an expert to talk with a young person about HIV infection and AIDS. But you should understand the basic facts so that you will deliver the right information. This guide will help you become familiar with the key facts. Talking about the facts with another adult may help you feel more comfortable as you prepare to talk with young people.

Step Into A Young Person's Shoes. What kinds of things did you do when you were the age of the young person with whom you plan to speak? How did you think? The better you understand a young person's point of view, the more effectively you'll be able to communicate. Also, thinking of some important differences between the world a child grows up in today and the one you grew up in can help you make your discussion timely and relevant.

Have A Mutual Conversation. A conversation is an *exchange* of ideas and information, not a lecture. Encourage the young person with whom you speak to talk and ask questions. Ask about his or her thoughts, feelings, and activities. Show that you want to learn from a young person just as you hope he or she will learn from you.

Listen. Listen to the young person with whom you speak as closely as you hope he or she will listen to you. Stop talking if he or she wants to speak. Give him or her your full attention, and make eye contact.

Be Upbeat. Try to show a positive attitude as you lead the discussion. A critical, disapproving tone can prompt a young person to ignore you.

Don't Get Discouraged. Young people often challenge what they hear from adults. If a young person questions what you say, try not to get into an argument. Encourage the young person to check your information with another source, such as the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS). You can also show him or her some of the information in this guide, especially the handout for his or her age group. If your first conversation is cut short for any reason, don't give up. It is important to try again.

Smart Decisions: Young People Can Make Them With Your Help

Even though young people may not ask for it, they often want guidance from adults. You can offer guidance to the young people you care about by helping them develop the skills to make smart decisions—decisions about their education, their social life, their health. Just as important, you can help young people to understand that they have the ability—and the responsibility—to make the key decisions that can prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Young People Do Make Decisions. Young people often feel they have no control over their lives. Adults tell them when to go to school, when to be home, when to go to bed, and when to wake up. It's important to help them see that they make decisions about their lives every day, such as what music they listen to and whom they spend time with. Point out that they also make—or will make— tough choices with serious consequences about sex and drugs.

Cause And Effect. Many young people do not fully understand the direct relationship between their decisions and the consequences that may result. In your role as a counselor or guide, you can help them see that thoughtful decisions can bring them direct benefits and save them from harsh consequences, such as HIV infection and AIDS.

Recognize Peer Pressures. Young people's decisions are often strongly influenced by pressure to conform with friends and acquaintances. Peer pressure can also cause young people to act on impulses rather than to think through their decisions.

You can help the young people with whom you speak consider the effects of peer pressure. Point out that it is okay to act according to their best judgment, not according to what friends encourage them to do. Suggest that their friends may be testing limits and looking for support in making sound choices. Talk about the difficulties you may have had defying peer pressure. Then talk about the reasons you are glad you did.

Deciding What To Say To Younger Children (Late Elementary And Middle School Aged)

Since most children in this age group are not sexually active or trying drugs, you may decide that the young people you speak with do not need to know the details of how HIV is transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse and injecting drug use. However, if you think they may be considering or may be doing things that put them at risk of infection, you will need to be sure they know the risks regardless of their age.

Children this age probably have heard about AIDS and may be scared by it. Much of what they have heard may have been incorrect. To reassure them, make sure they know that they cannot become infected through everyday contact, such as going to school with someone who is infected with HIV.

Children also may have heard myths and prejudicial comments about HIV infection and AIDS. Correct any notions that people can be infected by touching a doorknob or being bitten by a mosquito. Urge children to treat people who are infected with HIV or who have AIDS with compassion and understanding, not cruelty and anger. Correcting myths and prejudices early will help children protect themselves and others from HIV infection and AIDS in the future.

Consider including the following points in a conversation about HIV infection and AIDS with children in the late elementary and middle school aged levels:

- AIDS is a disease caused by a tiny germ called a virus.
- Many different types of people have AIDS today—male and female, rich and poor, white, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American.
- As of December 1993, nearly 68,000 people aged 20-29 have been diagnosed with AIDS. Because a person can be infected with HIV for as long as 10 or more years before the signs of AIDS appear, a significant number of these young people would have been infected when they were teenagers.
- There are many myths about AIDS. (Correct some of them if you can.)
- You can become infected with HIV either by having unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person or by sharing drug needles or syringes with an infected person. Also, women infected with HIV can pass the virus to their babies during pregnancy or during birth.
- A person who is infected can infect others in the ways described above, even if no symptoms are present. You cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with HIV. An infected person can appear completely healthy.
- People who have AIDS should be treated with compassion.

Information For Young People (Late Elementary And Middle School Aged)

You may have heard about a disease called AIDS. A lot of people have been talking about it lately. Many people have gotten AIDS in the past few years. A lot of them have died.

AIDS is a condition that weakens the body's power to fight off sickness. It's a very serious medical problem. That's why people are talking about it. But sometimes people talk without knowing the facts.

AIDS is caused by a tiny germ. Doctors call a germ like this a virus. The virus that causes AIDS is called the *human immunodeficiency virus* (HIV).

The key thing for you to understand about AIDS is that it is not easy to get through the things you do every day. You cannot "catch" AIDS like you can a cold or the chickenpox. You cannot get AIDS from doing things like going to school, using a bathroom, or riding in a school bus.

It is important to know the facts about AIDS. You can be a leader by knowing the truth.

All of the following statements about AIDS are true. Read them. Remember them. When you hear something about AIDS that isn't true, speak up. Say that you know the facts. Tell people the truth.

- You cannot get AIDS from the things you do every day, such as going to school, using a toilet, or drinking from a glass.
- You cannot get AIDS from sitting next to someone in school who has AIDS.
- You cannot get AIDS from a kiss on the cheek, or from touching or hugging someone who is infected.
- You cannot get AIDS from a mosquito or any other kind of insect. The virus that causes AIDS dies inside of bugs, so there is no way they can give it to you.
- You can become infected with HIV either by having unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person or by sharing drug needles or syringes with an infected person. Also, women infected with HIV can pass the virus to their babies during pregnancy, during birth, or through breast-feeding.
- A person who is infected can infect others during sexual intercourse, even if no symptoms are present. You cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with HIV. An infected person can appear completely healthy.
- You can play with someone who has HIV or AIDS just as you can with any of your other friends. This will not make you sick.
- Many different types of people have AIDS—male and female, rich and poor, white, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American.

- As of December 1993, nearly 68,000 people aged 20-29 have been diagnosed with AIDS. Because a person can be infected with the virus that causes AIDS for as long as 10 or more years before the signs of AIDS appear, scientists believe that a significant number of these young people would have been infected when they were teenagers.

- Being sick isn't fun. Treat people with AIDS the way you want to be treated when you are sick.

See How Much You Know About HIV Infection And AIDS

1. What is the name of the disease that weakens the body's power to fight off illness?

2. What is the name of the virus that causes AIDS?

3. Check all of the things that cannot infect you with HIV:

☐ a toilet ☐ a kiss on the cheek
☐ a drinking glass ☐ a mosquito
☐ going to school with someone who is infected with HIV
☐ helping someone who is infected with HIV or who has AIDS

Answers To Quiz

1. AIDS 2. HIV 3. All of the items should be checked. They can't infect you with HIV.

Deciding What To Say To Teenagers (Junior And Senior High School Aged)

Teens need to know a lot more about HIV infection and AIDS than do younger children. Teens are more likely to face choices about drug and alcohol use, and sex.

Because HIV is spread through unprotected sexual intercourse or sharing drug needles and syringes, teens need to learn how to make decisions that keep themselves and others from being infected with HIV. Because alcohol and drugs can cloud thinking, teens need to learn that using these substances can cause them to make decisions which can put them at risk.

Like younger children, teens also must learn to distinguish myths from facts about HIV infection and AIDS. They need to learn about the issues that the disease poses for society, such as the importance of opposing prejudice and discrimination. Discussing all of these things will help equip teens to make decisions that can prevent the spread of HIV infection and AIDS.

In a conversation with a teen, consider including the following points about making decisions, HIV infection, and AIDS:

- Give a definition of AIDS.
- Give a definition of HIV infection.
- Point out that as of December 1993, more than 361,000 Americans have AIDS and that nearly 68,000 of them are between the ages of 20 and 29. A significant number of these people would have been infected when they were teenagers.
- Explain how HIV is transmitted from one person to another.
- Explain how to reduce the risk for HIV infection from sex.
- Explain how HIV is transmitted through drug use.
- Discuss how to join the community response to AIDS.
- Give your thoughts on the importance of understanding and compassion toward people with AIDS.
- Talk about the importance of eliminating prejudice and discrimination related to AIDS.

Becoming Infected Through Sexual Intercourse

Many teenagers are sexually active. Unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected partner is one way to become infected with HIV. ***Avoiding sexual intercourse is one sure way to avoid infection with the virus.*** In deciding what you want to say to a young person about sex, you may want to consider these ideas:

Delay Sexual Intercourse. You may want to bear in mind that the idea of delaying sexual intercourse conflicts with the many sexual messages young people encounter

every day on television, in movies, at school, and from friends. Many young people conclude that "everyone is doing it."

By discussing the benefits of delaying sexual intercourse, you can help a young person make a wise and informed decision about when to become sexually active. You may wish to emphasize the following benefits of delaying sexual intercourse:

- Most religious, cultural, and social traditions and family values favor postponing intercourse until marriage.

- The longer sexual intercourse is delayed, the longer the guarantee of one's safety from all sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection. Every 11 seconds a teen in the United States gets a sexually transmitted disease.

- Delaying sexual intercourse gives a person time to be sure he or she is physically and emotionally ready to engage in a sexual relationship.

- Delaying sexual intercourse helps prevent unwanted pregnancy. Every 30 seconds a teen in the United States gets pregnant.

How To Avoid Risky Situations. Even young people who truly intend to delay sexual intercourse can have trouble refusing strong persuasion. You can help them succeed by talking with them about how to anticipate and avoid situations in which they might be pressured to have sex.

For instance, pressure can arise when two people are alone at one of their homes or in a car parked on "lovers' lane." Tell young people that when such a situation occurs, they can refuse verbally, or they can simply leave. If they cannot walk home, they can call a friend or a parent to pick them up. Advise them to have change with them at all times so that they will be able to use a public telephone.

Explain to them that ***no one*** has the right to force them to have sexual intercourse, and then tell them some effective ways to refuse. You may want to consider the suggestions in the following section.

How To Say No To Risky Activities. Young people will be more likely to refuse activities that place them at risk for HIV infection if you suggest some effective ways to say no.

For instance, when you talk about sex and HIV infection, discuss ways to say no to sex. You might suggest some of the following examples, or use your own.

- "I am just not ready for it yet."

- "I know it feels right for you and I care about you. But I'm not going to do it until I'm sure it's the right thing for me to do."

- "I care about you but I don't want the responsibility that comes with sex."

- "I think sex outside of marriage is wrong."

- "I feel good about not having sex until I'm married. I've made my decision and I feel comfortable with it."

Ask the young people you talk with to think of some of their own ways to say no and to practice them with you.

What Can They Do Instead? Telling young people only what they shouldn't do can make a parent sound very negative. It will be helpful to discuss some risk-free alternatives. Young people will be better able to choose safe behaviors if you tell them ways to express their romantic feelings without risk of HIV infection.

You can make a list of these activities and review it during your conversation. Ask the young people you talk with to suggest some of their own ideas.

If You Think A Teen Is Sexually Active. Short of abstaining from sex, the best way to protect oneself from sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV infection, is to have sex only with one faithful, uninfected partner in a long-term relationship.

It is crucial that people understand that the more sex partners they have, the greater their risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease, such as HIV.

You can also help young people avoid dangerous sexual decisions by stressing that young people should avoid making decisions about sexual intercourse while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These substances cloud judgment and lower inhibitions, and people with clouded judgment are more likely to take sexual risks that will increase their chance of HIV infection.

You may wish to discuss the importance of using a latex condom. Such discussion may help young people make wise decisions that will reduce the risk of HIV infection during sexual intercourse. Latex condoms provide a barrier and, if used correctly and consistently, greatly reduce the risk of infection with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. People who decide to be sexually active outside a mutually faithful, long-term relationship with an uninfected partner should understand the importance of using a condom every time they have sexual intercourse.

For more detailed information about how to use a latex condom, read the part of this guide called "Common Questions, Accurate Answers."

Preventing HIV Transmission Caused By Needle Sharing

HIV often spreads among people who share needles and syringes. If you know young people who use needles for a medical reason (such as people with hemophilia or diabetes), make sure they use and dispose of their needles properly. Needles should be used only under a doctor's order and should never be shared.

In your role of counselor or guide, it is vital that you urge young people not to use drugs. Many drug users face a short, bleak future—jail, hospitalization, or an early grave—and drug use increases their risk of HIV infection.

If you talk with a young person about drug use and HIV infection, talk about ways to say no to drugs. You might suggest some of the following ways, or use examples of your own:

- "I just don't want to take drugs."
- "I don't want to lose my job. Drugs and work don't mix."
- "I want to be a good athlete. Drugs will harm my body."
- "I want to go to college. I can't risk getting hooked on drugs."

- "I want to join the Army. Drugs could blow my chances."
- "Drugs are illegal. I won't break the law."
- "When I take drugs, I don't feel in control. I don't like that feeling."
- "I love my life. Drugs can kill me."

Ask the young people you talk with to think of their own ways to say no to drugs and practice them with you.

If you think a young person you know has a drug problem, get professional help now. Contact your doctor, local health department, or social service agency to find out who can help you in your community. Call the 24-hour hotline of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (1-800-662-HELP) to find out where you can get help in your area.

Information For Young People (Junior And Senior High School Aged)

As of December 1993, nearly 68,000 people between the ages of 20 and 29 have been diagnosed with AIDS. Many of them probably were infected with the virus that causes AIDS when they were teenagers.

You or your friends may unknowingly be doing things that put you at risk for getting infected with HIV. For instance, the virus that causes AIDS can be passed from one person to another through unprotected sexual intercourse. Today a teen in the United States gets pregnant every 30 seconds. Every 11 seconds a teen in the United States gets a sexually transmitted disease (STD), such as gonorrhea or chlamydia. The same sexual activities that cause pregnancy and give you STDs can infect you with the virus that causes AIDS.

There are other ways besides sexual intercourse that teens can get AIDS. To find out how to protect yourself and your friends, read on.

What is AIDS

AIDS stands for *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.*

AIDS is a condition in which the body's immune system–the system that fights off sickness–breaks down. Because the system fails, a person with AIDS typically develops a variety of life-threatening illnesses.

What is HIV Infection?

AIDS is caused by a virus that scientists call ***human immunodeficiency virus***, or HIV. A virus is a small germ that can cause disease.

If HIV enters your body, you may become infected with HIV. From the time a person is infected, he or she can infect others, even if no symptoms are present. A special blood test can detect HIV.

HIV can hide in a person's body for years without producing any symptoms. Even if no symptoms are present, anyone infected with HIV should be under a doctor's care.

People infected with HIV can develop many health problems. These can include extreme weight loss, severe pneumonia, certain forms of cancer, and damage to the nervous system. These illnesses signal the onset of AIDS. In some people, these illnesses may develop within a year or two. Others may stay healthy for as long as 10 or more years before symptoms appear.

What Is The Difference Betweem HIV And AIDS?

HIV infection and AIDS are serious health problems. AIDS is the result of a long process that begins with HIV infection.

A person will not develop AIDS unless he or she has been infected with HIV. By preventing HIV infection, we can prevent future cases of AIDS.

How Does Someone Become Infected With HIV?

A person becomes infected when HIV is introduced into his or her body. There are two main ways that people become infected with HIV:

- By engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse—vaginal, anal, or oral—with an infected person.

- By sharing drug needles or syringes with an infected person.

Also, women who are infected with HIV can pass it on to their babies during pregnancy, birth, or breast-feeding.

Last, some people have become infected through receiving blood transfusions. Since 1985, the American blood supply has been tested for HIV. Transmission through an infected blood transfusion is extremely rare today.

How Do You Get HIV Through Sex?

HIV is spread through unprotected sexual intercourse, from male to female, female to male, or male to male. Female-to female transmission is also possible.

HIV may be in an infected person's blood, semen, or vaginal secretions. It is thought that it can enter the body through cuts or sores—some so small you don't know they're there—on tissue in the vagina, penis, or rectum, and possibly the mouth.

Since many people infected with HIV have no symptoms, you can't be sure who is infected. Any contact with infected blood, semen, or vaginal secretions may spread the virus. Therefore, the more sex partners you have, the greater your chances of encountering one who is infected, and then becoming infected yourself.

How Do You Get HIV From Sharing Needles?

Sharing needles, even once, is a very easy way to be infected with HIV. Whether you inject drugs or steroids, you risk becoming infected with HIV if you share needles or syringes. Blood from an infected person can stay in a needle or syringe and then be transmitted to the next person who uses it.

Important Questions

How can you tell if the person you are dating or would like to date has been infected with HIV? The simple answer is, you can't. But as long as sexual intercourse and sharing needles are avoided, it doesn't matter.

If you are thinking about becoming sexually involved with someone, here are some important questions to consider.

Has this person had any sexually transmitted diseases? How many people has he or she had sex with? Has he or she experimented with drugs? All of these are sensitive questions. But they are important, and you have a responsibility to ask.

You should think of it this way: If you know someone well enough to have sex, the two of you should be able to talk about HIV infection and AIDS. If someone is unwilling to talk, you shouldn't have sex.

How Can I Avoid HIV Infection?

Don't do drugs of any kind. Sharing needles to inject drugs can infect you. And many drugs, especially alcohol, can cloud your judgment and cause you to do things that place you at risk for HIV infection.

Delay sexual intercourse. Don't have sexual intercourse. Abstinence is the only sure protection. If you do have sexual intercourse, wait until you are in a long-term, mutually faithful relationship, such as

marriage, with an uninfected partner. By choosing not to have intercourse, you:

- help guarantee your safety from all sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection. Remember, every 11 seconds a teen in the U.S. gets a sexually transmitted disease.
- give yourself more time to be sure you are physically and emotionally ready to engage in a sexual relationship.
- give yourself more time to learn and understand more about the physical and emotional aspects of sexual relationships.
- follow religious, cultural, and social traditions that favor postponing intercourse until marriage.
- help guarantee your safety from unwanted pregnancy. Remember, every 30 seconds a teen in the U.S. gets pregnant.

When you decide you are ready to become sexually active, do so only with one uninfected partner in a mutually faithful, long-term relationship, such as marriage.

Avoid sexual intercourse with people who may be infected with HIV. These include people who have:

- injected drugs.
- had multiple or anonymous sex partners.
- had any sexually transmitted diseases.

If you have sexual intercourse outside of a mutually faithful, long-term relationship with an uninfected partner, use a latex condom whenever having any type of sexual intercourse.

Do not make decisions about sexual intercourse while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These substances can cloud your judgment and cause you to take risks that could put you in danger of becoming infected with HIV.

How Else Can I Help Stop AIDS?

If you've read this far, you know the facts about HIV infection and AIDS. You'd be surprised at how many people don't know them. A lot of people believe all sorts of myths about AIDS—myths that can be very harmful.

These myths can cause people to unknowingly put themselves, and others, at risk of infection. They can also cause people to treat others unfairly. For instance, some people incorrectly think that AIDS only affects certain groups of people. Because they fear AIDS, they do cruel things to people in those groups.

We should work to make sure that such prejudice and unfair treatment doesn't happen. Now that you know the facts about HIV infection and AIDS, you can tell others the truth and speak out against myths and prejudice.

What's more, people infected with HIV and those with AIDS can use your help. If you know someone who has AIDS, you can give compassion, friendship, or other help without fear of infection from everyday contact.

Even if you don't know anyone who is infected, you can join your community's

effort to stop AIDS. You can volunteer your time with a local health organization, youth group, or religious group that has an HIV and AIDS program. Or you can contribute just by informally educating your peers about AIDS. Who knows? You just may save someone's life.

Do You Know The Facts About HIV Infection And AIDS?

1. HIV can be spread through which of the following?
   A. insect bites
   B. everyday contact
   C. sharing drug needles
   D. sexual intercourse

2. You can tell by looking whether a person is infected with HIV.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

3. From the time a person is infected with HIV, he or she can infect others.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

4. Providing help to people infected with HIV or people with AIDS does not put you at risk of infection.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

5. Babies can be infected by their mothers during pregnancy, birth, or, breast-feeding.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

6. If you have sexual intercourse only with members of the opposite sex, you cannot be infected with HIV.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

7. If they are used properly and consistently, latex condoms are an effective way to prevent the spread of HIV.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

8. The more sex partners you have, the greater your chances of becoming infected with HIV.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

9. If you think you've been exposed to HIV, you should seek counseling and be tested.
☐TRUE ☐FALSE

Answers To Quiz

1. C and D 2. FALSE 3. TRUE 4. TRUE
5. TRUE 6. FALSE 7. TRUE 8. TRUE
9. TRUE

How To Join The Community Response

Everyone Can Help

You are a vital member of the community team that provides HIV and AIDS education, reinforces safe behavior, and promotes healthful attitudes. When parents and other adults join with civic groups, youth groups, educators, and religious groups, communities can convey these messages to young people and prevent the spread of HIV infection and AIDS.

Both adults and young people can join the community's efforts by talking to friends, neighbors, colleagues, and relatives. Remember, you don't have to be an expert to teach people about HIV infection and AIDS. By speaking with peers, people who know the facts about HIV infection and AIDS can help stop the spread of the disease.

Using Community Organizations

Many communities have valuable resources to inform their young people about HIV infection and AIDS. These organizations, such as the American Red Cross, the March of Dimes, National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs, and your local "Y," can tell you how to get involved with public education, volunteer programs, and fundraising drives. To find out about such resources in your community, look for listings in the telephone book.

You can also invite speakers from these groups to address your group about HIV infection and AIDS prevention, where appropriate. A local health organization that focuses on AIDS treatment, counseling, or education can help you find good speakers. To get the name of such an organization in your community, call the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS). People with AIDS, health educators, or local and State government officials might make good speakers.

You Are The Key

Many community groups involved in the fight against AIDS operate on shoestring budgets and depend heavily on individuals' contributions of time and money. Please help them succeed. Your community will appreciate it.

Help A Person With AIDS

One important way you can help is to volunteer your services to people with AIDS. As their condition becomes more disabling, people with AIDS have increasing trouble meeting their daily needs. You can offer help by shopping, cooking meals, or just visiting and talking with people with AIDS on a regular basis. To find out what you can do to help people with AIDS, you can contact an AIDS education or service organization, or an organization of people with AIDS in your community. For more information, call the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS) or your local health department.

Comprehensive Health Education In Schools

You can talk to your local school board, superintendent, principal, teachers, guid-

ance counselors, or child to find out about the HIV infection and AIDS education programs your local school offers and how you can contribute.

A comprehensive health education curriculum with an HIV infection and AIDS component is an excellent way to provide children with knowledge, skills, and support to lead healthy lives. A comprehensive school health education curriculum is an organized, sequential, school health curriculum that starts at the appropriate ages and continues through senior year. It can teach students at the appropriate ages about sexually transmitted diseases, drug abuse, AIDS, and other health concerns, and help them develop decision-making skills and healthy lifestyles.

Make sure your local educators know that you want young people to learn about HIV infection and AIDS prevention in school. PTA meetings can be excellent settings to discuss this issue.

Using Local Media

Your local media play an important role in your community's response to HIV and AIDS. Call or write to your local television and radio stations and newspapers, urging them to air more AIDS public service announcements that target young people, publish stories related to HIV infection and AIDS, and report prevention facts accurately.

Obtaining And Distributing Educational Materials

You can get a variety of educational materials, including posters, brochures, and additional copies of this guide through the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS) or by writing to: CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 6003, Dept. G, Rockville, MD 20849. You can hang posters in restaurants, bowling alleys, bus stops, beauty parlors, shops, and pharmacies. Think of the young people you know, and try to reach them in other creative ways.

There is also information available on how businesses can help respond to HIV and AIDS. Call the Business Responds to AIDS Resource Service of the CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse at 1-800-458-5231

Where To Go For Further Information And Assistance

National Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS) offers 24-hour service seven days a week to respond to any questions that you or a young person may have about HIV infection and AIDS. All calls are free, and you need not give your name. The service is available in Spanish (1-800-344-7432) and for the deaf (1-800-243-7889).

Hotline information specialists also can refer you to groups in your area that work professionally on HIV infection and AIDS issues. Also, they can direct you to local counseling and testing centers, and tell you where to get additional materials.

For additional copies of this guide and other publications on AIDS and HIV infection, you can call the CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse (1-800-458-5231) or write the Clearinghouse at P.O. Box 6003, Rockville, MD 20849.

State And Local Health Departments

If you have questions about AIDS prevention efforts in your coummunity, the CDC National AIDS Hotline can tell you how to reach your State or local health department. Also, you can find the number listed under "Health Department" in the local and State Government section of your telephone book.

Community Organizations

Thousands of local organizations, such as the PTA, March of Dimes, National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, the American Red Cross, and Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs, are working hard to stop the spread of HIV infection. To find out about such organizations in your community, look for them by name in the telephone book or call your local health department.

Schools

Talk to your local school board, superintendent, principal, teachers, or guidance counselors to find out about the HIV and AIDS education programs that your local school offers, and how you can help to make them work. Make sure they know that you support learning about preventing HIV infection and AIDS as part of comprehensive health education in school.

The Health Care Team

If you have concerns about your health or the health of your child, share them with a doctor, nurse, or another health care provider.

CDC National AIDS Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 6003
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